

## Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07  
IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04  
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/089 W

-----130818Z 094676 /14

P R 121843Z MAY 77  
FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2118  
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
INFO USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USNMR SHAPE  
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MBFR VIENNA 0216

MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PARM, NATO  
SUBJ: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: MAY 12 WESTERN PLENARY STATEMENT

THE 135TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, THE FIRST  
ONE OF THE TWELFTH ROUND, TOOK PLACE ON MAY 12 UNDER THE  
CHAIRMANSHIP OF BELGIAN REP (SMOLDEREN). NETHERLANDS REP (DEVOS)  
AND GDR REP (OESER) DELIVERED THE ONLY FORMAL STATEMENTS. GDR  
PRESENTATION, WHICH WAS ROUTINE IN CONTENT AND INCLUDED LOW KEY  
REFERENCE TO EASTERN PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE NATIONAL DATA ON A  
RECIPROCAL BASIS, IS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY. IN HIS STATEMENT,  
NETHERLANDS REP PRESSED THE WESTERN CASE FOR FOCUSING ON GROUND  
FORCE REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS, STRESSED THE FLEXIBILITY  
MANIFESTED IN THE DECEMBER 1975 WESTERN PROPOSALS, AND URGED  
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THE EAST TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THOSE PROPOSALS PROVIDED AN  
EQUITABLE BASIS FOR ACHIEVING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT.  
THE MAIN POINTS OF DEVOS' STATEMENT, THE FULL TEXT OF WHICH  
FOLLOWS BY AIRGRAM, WERE:

1) THE WEST, AFTER HAVING THOROUGHLY ANALYZED THE SECURITY  
SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE, REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THE

AGREED GOALS OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE ACHIEVED BY REDUCTIONS  
FOCUSED ON GROUND FORCES.

2) THE MILITARY SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE IS CHARACTERIZED  
BY A LARGE SCALE CONCENTRATION OF FORCES, OF WHICH GROUND FORCES  
CONSTITUTE NOT ONLY BY FAR THE LARGEST COMPONENT BUT ALSO CARRY  
THE GREATEST MILITARY AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

3) GROUND FORCES ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN A CONTINUOUS,  
DENSELY POPULATED AREA WITH WELL DEVELOPED LINES OF  
COMMUNICATIONS SUCH AS CENTRAL EUROPE.

4) TANKS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE WITHIN GROUND FORCES, BEING  
ESPECIALLY SUITED FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS--A FACT WHICH MAKES  
THE LARGE, FORWARD DEPLOYED SOVIET TANK FORMATIONS IN THE  
AREA ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT.

5) EASTERN MILITARY AUTHORITIES THEMSELVES HAVE PUBLICLY  
RECOGNIZED THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF GROUND FORCES AND THE  
CRUCIAL ROLE OF TANKS WITHIN THEM.

6) ANOTHER REASON FOR THE WESTERN FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES IS THE  
EAST'S LARGE NUMERICAL SUPERIORITIES IN GROUND FORCE MANPOWER  
AND TANKS.

7) SUCH SUPERIORITIES ARE DESTABILIZING BECAUSE THEY INCREASE  
THE RISK OF MISCALCULATION IN TIMES OF TENSIONS AND, SHOULD  
CONFLICT OCCUR, OF NUCLEAR ESCALATION.

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8) MOREOVER THESE DESTABILIZING SUPERIORITIES ARE  
MAGNIFIED BY THE EAST'S GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES.

9) IN ORDER TO ENHANCE STABILITY, AN AGREEMENT MUST EFFECTIVELY  
DEAL WITH THESE DISPARITIES, WHICH THE WESTERN PROPOSALS  
DO BY PROVIDING FOR AN OUTCOME BASED ON PARITY.

10) WESTERN PROPOSALS PROVIDE FOR TWO PHASES OF  
NEGOTIATIONS AND REDUCTIONS, LEADING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
COMMON CEILING ON GROUND FORCE MANPOWER AND A MITIGATION OF THE  
DISPARITY IN MAIN BATTLE TANKS.

11) IN ORDER TO ENSURE WESTERN SECURITY, THE COMMON CEILING  
ON MILITARY MANPOWER MUST BE COLLECTIVE SO AS TO AVOID  
INTERFERENCE WITH NATO'S INTEGRATED DEFENSE SYSTEM AND  
PREJUDICE TO THE FUTURE ORGANIZATION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

12) IN CONTRAST WITH WESTERN PROPOSALS, WHICH EQUITABLY  
DEAL WITH THE REALITIES OF THE EXISTING MILITARY SITUATION,

THE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH NOT ONLY FAILS TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE MAJOR DESTABILIZING DISPARITIES IN THE AREA, BUT RATHER WOULD CONTRACTUALIZE THEM TO THE DETRIMENT OF STABILITY.

13) THE WESTERN FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES IS MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISINTERPRETED BY THE EAST - A FACT DEMONSTRATED BY EASTERN STATEMENTS WHICH COMPLETELY DISREGARD THE BROADER GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT IN WHICH WESTERN PROPOSALS MUST BE EVALUATED.

14) CONTRARY TO EASTERN CONTENTIONS, THE WESTERN APPROACH DOES NOT LEAVE ALL OTHER FORCE ELEMENTS OUT OF ACCOUNT.

15) IN ORDER TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK IN THE TALKS, THE WEST IN DECEMBER 1975 TOOK INTO ACCOUNT EASTERN CONCERNS BY OFFERING TO REDUCE AND LIMIT SELECTED US NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND TO INCLUDE AIR MANPOWER UNDER A COMBINED COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING WITHOUT ASKING ANY ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS OF THE EAST.  
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16) IN SO DOING, THE WEST PROVIDED A PRACTICAL AND REALISTIC COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE EAST'S DESIRE FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD REDUCTIONS AND THE WEST'S ORIGINAL REQUIREMENT THAT REDUCTIONS BE LIMITED TO GROUND FORCE MANPOWER AND TANKS.

17) THUS, WHILE CONTINUING TO FOCUS ITS APPROACH ON GROUND FORCES, THE WEST HAS DISPLAYED ITS FLEXIBILITY BY PROPOSING MEANS TO RECONCILE THE CONFLICTING REDUCTION APPROACHES OF THE TWO SIDES.

18. WESTERN PARTICIPANTS HOPE THAT IN THE CURRENT ROUND THEIR EASTERN NEGOTIATING PARTNERS WILL FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE WEST HAS PROVIDED A PRACTICAL BASIS FOR ACHIEVING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. RESOR

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**To:** STATE DOD  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009